

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion.

Claims 1-3, 5-19, and 23-25 are pending in the application; Claims 9 and 24 are amended by way of the present response.

In the Office Action Claims 9 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 11-095519 to Fujimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,612,771 to Yamamoto et al. (Yamamoto). The amendments to the claims have overcome the rejection for the following reasons.

Initially, Applicants express thanks for the Examiner's allowance of Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 10-19.

The present invention is directed to color image forming apparatuses. Independent Claims 9 and 24 recite a transfer belt device which feeds a transfer member, a transportation path configured to reverse an orientation of the transfer member, and a plurality of image forming units, which are disposed facing towards the transfer belt device. As recited in independent Claim 9, a waste toner container having a substantially triangular cross section is installed under the transfer belt device such that an end portion of the waste toner container projects outwardly from an end portion of the transfer belt and is installed under the transportation path such that an end portion of the waste toner container is installed under the transportation path. As recited in independent Claim 24, a waste toner container is installed under the transfer belt device such that a side of the waste toner container closest to the transfer belt is substantially parallel to an inclination direction of the transfer belt and the transportation path is disposed between the waste container and the transfer belt device.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claim 9, it is asserted that neither Fujimoto nor Yamamoto discloses or renders obvious the claimed features of a waste toner container installed under a transfer belt device and under a transportation path.

The claimed features can provide numerous advantages that cannot be provided by Fujimoto and Yamamoto. By way of specific non-limiting examples, the features recited in Claim 9 can provide an image forming apparatus in which the waste toner container is efficiently disposed, such that wasted space in an interior of the image forming apparatus is minimized.

For these reasons, it is requested that the rejection of independent Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claim 9 is requested.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claim 24, it is asserted that neither Fujimoto nor Yamamoto discloses or renders obvious the claimed features of and a transportation path disposed between a waste container and a transfer belt device.

For reasons similar to those discussed above, the features recited in independent Claim 24 can provide numerous advantages that cannot be provided by Fujimoto and Yamamoto, including an image forming apparatus in which the waste toner container is efficiently disposed, such that wasted space in an interior of the image forming apparatus is minimized. For these reasons, it is requested that the rejection of independent Claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claim 24 is requested.

Claims 23 and 25 are allowable for the same reasons as independent Claims 9 and 24 from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, it is requested that the rejection of dependent Claims 23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of dependent Claims 23 and 25 is requested.

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Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-3, 5-19, and 23-25 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

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